

THE MISCELLANY.

VOL. I.

MONDAY, OCTOBER 21, 1805.

NO. 20.

Classical Literature.

THE HISTORY OF RASSELAS,
PRINCE OF ABISSINIA.

The Debate on Marriage continued.

"THE good of the whole, says Rasselas, 'is the same with the good of all its parts. If marriage be best for mankind, it must be evidently best for individuals; or a permanent and necessary duty must be the cause of evil, and some must be inevitably sacrificed to the convenience of others. In the estimate which you have made of the two states, it appears that the incommunities of a single life are, in a great measure, necessary and certain, but those of the conjugal state accidental and avoidable.'

"I cannot forbear to flatter myself that prudence and benevolence will make marriage happy. The general folly of mankind is the cause of general complaint. What can be expected but disappointment and repentance from a choice made in the immaturity of youth, in the ardour of desire, without judgment, without foresight, without inquiry after conformity of opinion, similarity of manners, rectitude of judgment, or purity of sentiment?

"Such is the common process of marriage. A youth or maiden meeting one another by chance, or brought together by artifice, exchange glances, reciprocate civilities, go home, and dream of one another. Having little to divert attention, or diversify thought, they find themselves uneasy when they are apart, and therefore conclude that they shall be happy together. They marry, and discover what nothing but voluntary blindness before had concealed; they wear out life in altercations, and charge nature with cruelty.

"From those early marriages proceeds likewise the rivalry of parents and children: the son is eager to enjoy the world before the father is willing to forsake it, and there is hardly room at once for two generations. The daughter begins to bloom before the mother can be content to fade, and neither can forbear to wish for the absence of the other.

"Surely all these evils may be avoided by that deliberation and delay which prudence prescribes to irrevocable choice. In the variety and jollity of youthful pleasures life may be well enough supported without the help of a partner. Longer time will increase experience, and wider views will allow better opportunities of inquiry and selection: one advantage, at least, will be certain; the parents will be visibly older than their children."

"What reason cannot collect," said Nekayah, "and what experiment has not yet taught, can be known only from the report of others. I have been told that late marriages are not eminently happy. This is a question

too important to be neglected, and I have often proposed it to those whose accuracy of remark, and comprehensiveness of knowledge, made their suffrages worthy of regard. They have generally determined that it is dangerous for a man and woman to suspend their fate upon each other, at a time when opinions are fixed, and habits are established; when friendships have been contracted on both sides, when life has been planned into method, and the mind has long enjoyed the contemplation of its own prospects.

"It is scarcely possible that two travelling through the world under the conduct of chance, should have been both directed to the same path, and it will not often happen that either will quit the track that custom has made pleasing. When the desultory levity of youth has settled into regularity, it is soon succeeded by pride ashamed to yield, or obstinacy delighting to contend. And even though mutual esteem produces mutual desire to please, time itself, as it modifies unchangeably the external mien, determines likewise the direction of the passions, and gives an inflexible rigidity to the manners. Long customs are not easily broken; he that attempts to change the course of his own life, very often labours in vain; and how shall we do that for others which we are seldom able to do for ourselves?"

"But surely," interposed the prince, "you suppose the chief motive of choice forgotten or neglected. Whenever I shall seek a wife, it shall be my first question, whether she be willing to be led by reason?"

"Thus it is," said Nekayah, "that philosophers are deceived. There are a thousand familiar disputes which reason never can decide; questions that elude investigation, and make logic ridiculous: cases where something must be done, and where little can be said. Consider the state of mankind, and inquire how few can be supposed to act upon any occasions, whether small or great, with all the reasons of action, present to their minds. Wretched would be the pair above all names of wretchedness, who should be doomed to adjust by reason every morning all the minute detail of a domestic day.

"Those who marry at an advanced age will probably escape the encroachments of their children; but, in diminution of this advantage, they will be likely to leave them, ignorant and helpless, to a guardian's mercy: or, if that should not happen, they must at least go out of the world before they see those whom they love best either wise or great.

"From their children, if they have less to fear, they have less also to hope; and they lose without equivalent the joys of early love, and the convenience of uniting with manners pliant, and minds susceptible of new impressions, which might wear away their dissimilarities by long cohabitation, as soft bodies, by continual attrition, conform their surfaces to each other.

"I believe it will be found that those who marry late are best pleased with their children, and those who marry early with their partners."

"The union of those two affections," said Rasselas, "would produce all that could be wished. Perhaps there is a time when marriage might unite them, a time neither too early for the father, nor too late for the husband."

"Every hour," answered the princess, "confirms my prejudice in favour of the position so often uttered by the mouth of Imlac: 'That nature sets her gifts on the right hand and on the left.' Those conditions which flatter hope, and attract desire, are so constituted, that as we approach one, we recede from another. There are goods so opposed that we cannot seize both, but, by too much prudence, may pass between them at too great a distance to reach either. This is often the fate of long consideration; he does nothing who endeavours to do more than is allowed to humanity. Flatter not yourself with contrarieties of pleasure. Of the blessings set before you make your choice, and be content. No man can taste the fruits of autumn while he is delighting his scent with the flowers of the spring: no man can, at the same time, fill his cup from the source and from the mouth of the Nile."

Imlac enters, and changes the Conversation.

HERE Imlac entered, and interrupted them. "Imlac," said Rasselas, "I have been taking from the princess the dismal history of private life, and am almost discouraged from further search."

"It seems to me," said Imlac, "that while you are making the choice of life, you neglect to live. You wander about a single city, which, however large and diversified, can now afford few novelties; and forget that you are in a country famous among the earliest monarchies for the power and wisdom of its inhabitants; a country where the sciences first dawned that illuminate the world, and beyond which the arts cannot be traced of civil society or domestic life.

"The old Egyptians have left behind them monuments of industry and power, before which all European magnificence is confessed to fade away. The ruins of their architecture are the schools of modern builders, and from the wonders which time has spared we may conjecture, though uncertainly, what it has destroyed."

"My curiosity," said Rasselas, "does not very strongly lead me to survey piles of stone, or mounds of earth; my business is with man. I came hither not to measure fragments of temples, or trace choaked aqueducts, but to look upon the various scenes of the present world."

"The things that are now before us," said the princess, "require attention, and deserve it. What have I to do with the heroes or the monuments of ancient times? with times which never can return, and heroes, whose form of life was different from all that the present condition of mankind requires or allows."

"To know any thing," returned the poet, we must know its effects; to see men, we must see their works, that we may learn what reason has dictated, or passion has incited, and find what are the most powerful motives of action. To judge rightly of the present, we must oppose it to the past; for all judgment is comparative, and of the future nothing can be known. The truth is, that no mind is much employed upon the present: recollection and anticipation fill up almost all our moments. Our passions are joy and grief, love and hatred, hope and fear. Of joy and grief, the past is the object, and the future of hope and fear; even love and hatred respect the past, for the cause must have been before the effect.

"The present state of things is the consequence of the former, and it is natural to inquire what were the sources of the good that we enjoy, or the evil that we suffer. If we act only for ourselves, to neglect the study of history is not prudent: if we are entrusted with the care of others, it is not just. Ignorance, when it is voluntary, is criminal; and he may properly be charged with evil, who refused to learn how he might prevent it.

"There is no part of history so generally useful as that which relates the progress of the human mind, the gradual improvement of reason, the successive advances of science, the vicissitudes of learning and ignorance, which are the light and darkness of thinking beings, the extinction and resuscitation of arts, and the revolutions of the intellectual world. If accounts of battles and invasions are peculiarly the business of princes, the useful or elegant arts are not to be neglected: those who have kingdoms to govern, have understandings to cultivate.

"Example is always more efficacious than precept. A soldier is formed in war, and a painter must copy pictures. In this, contemplative life has the advantage: great actions are seldom seen, but the labours of art are always at hand for those who desire to know what art has been able to perform.

"When the eye or the imagination is struck with any uncommon work, the next transition of an active mind is to the means by which it was performed. Here begins the true use of such contemplation; we enlarge our comprehension by new ideas, and perhaps recover some art lost to mankind, or learn what is less perfectly known in our own country. At least we compare our own with former times, and either rejoice at our improvements, or, what is the first motion towards good, discover our defects."

"I am willing," said the prince, "to see all that can deserve my search."—"And I," said the princess, "shall rejoice to learn something of the manners of antiquity."

"The most pompous monument of Egyptian greatness, and one of the most bulky works of manual industry," said Imlac, "are the pyra-

mids; fabrics raised before the time of history, and of which the earliest narratives afford us only uncertain traditions. Of these the greatest is still standing, very little injured by time."

"Let us visit them to-morrow," said Nekayah. "I have often heard of the pyramids, and shall not rest till I have seen them within and without with my own eyes."

TO BE CONTINUED.

FOR THE MISCELLANY.

ON GEOGRAPHY.

If to enlighten and to enlarge the human mind, to remove the shades of ignorance, and to open fresh avenues of knowledge, be the chief ends of science, none, in my opinion, embraces a wider circle, and offers a more extensive combination of those desirable objects than geography. Even its fundamental principles are of the greatest utility in the daily avocations of life. To be well acquainted with the general divisions of land and water, the names of places and their respective situations, is a branch of knowledge which it is impossible to want without the self conviction of the grossest ignorance and inattention. But this is one of the least important provinces of geography. Our acquisitions so far are solely those of memory: the judgment lies dormant, and fancy slumbers.

But when, from an acquaintance with the names and terms of the art, we rise to its sublime contemplations; when we consider the earth as peopled with various nations, and acquire an insight into their manners, religion, government, and pursuits; then geography assumes a most attractive form, and fills the mind with ideas worthy of itself.

If we regard this science only as an useful auxiliary to trade, it is no insignificant acquisition. To be well acquainted with the natural and artificial productions of countries, the manufactures, exports, and imports, is on important consideration. But the student must not stop here: he must enlarge his conceptions by comparative researches into men and manners: he must trace the origin and influence of laws, the effects of civilization, and modes of life, through all their obliquities and variety of shades; and, while he indulges in those wide speculations, he may from what is good deduce maxims to regulate his own conduct, or to enlighten others; from what is bad, he may learn to avoid the errors that human frailty, aided by prejudice, has so abundantly disseminated over the globe; and pity where he cannot admire.

The Hottentot and the Tartar, in the dawn of reason, with barely the features of men, and still remote from civilization and refinement, will afford reflections on what human nature is devoid of learning and the arts. The absurd theology of barbarous nations, where the fantastic figure of Numbo Jumbo, a snake or an insect, is the object of divine adoration, will display the sublimity of that religion, which is founded on a sense of infinite perfection and almighty power, and refers all to a superintending Providence. The savage in-

stitutions of many kingdoms, where man is degraded to the slave, and cruel caprice, rather than legitimate authority, is the fluctuating rule of action, will teach the value of government founded in law and supported by social order.

If prejudice has taken hold on the heart (and where is that heart in which it is totally unknown?) it cannot be better eradicated, than by viewing nations under the influence of customs and laws different from our own; yet perhaps, on inquiry, best adapted to situation, climate, and native predilections.

To confine all excellence to the country in which we were born; to deny merit to all those who do not think and act exactly in the same manner as we do, is the defect of the narrow soul; but, to love our own country best, and to study to promote its interests, and extend the honour of its name, is compatible with the finest feelings, and the most christian charity. It ennobles us as men and citizens.

In all those points of view, philosophic geography, to use a new epithet, if duly attended to, will serve for an instructor and guide. In short, it is the science of life and manners, of laws and government; and is as useful to the man as it is ornamental to the scholar.

M.

FOR THE MISCELLANY.

ON IDLENESS.

Of all the vices which prevail among mankind, there is none, perhaps, more destructive to every principle of good than that of idleness. The want of occupation renders life disagreeable, fosters opinions destructive of the existence, and in direct opposition to the happiness of society. Indolent habits not only engender many diseases in the body, but are also inimical to the improvement of the mind. Idleness, when once allowed to extend its influence, undermines, by a silent and secret progress, every virtue of the soul.—Exercise is the price which nature has ordained shall be paid for health: thence probably originated that laudable custom which prevailed among the Parthians. They suffered not their children to eat until they had gone through some exercise, or done something which might contribute to the health of their bodies or improvement of their minds. Solon introduced a severe law into his commonwealth against idleness, and the judges were very vigilant in inquiring into the life and manners of every particular subject, and in seeing this law put into execution, as appears from the following narrative.

"There was at Athens two poor young men, who took pleasure in reading, in order to acquire wisdom and knowledge. They had no visible means of support, yet they kept up their flesh and colour, looked hale, well, and in good case. The judges had information given them of the retired life of these two, and that it did not appear they had any thing to maintain them; consequently, as they could not live without sustenance, they must have some clandestine means of subsisting. On this information the young men were summoned before the judges, and ordered to answer to the

charge. One of the accused said, that little credit was given to what a man could urge in his own defence; because it was natural to think, that every criminal would either deny or extenuate the crime he was charged with; and, as the testimony of a disinterested person was not liable to suspicion, he desired a certain baker, whom he named, might be summoned, in order to answer for him. The baker declared, that the young men under examination took it by turns to grind his corn every night; and that, for the night's work, he every morning paid the young man who ground at his mill a drachma, or groat. The judges, surprised at their abstinence and industry, ordered a reward of two hundred drachmas to be paid them out of the public treasury."

If such laws were instituted here amongst us, the "enlightened sons of liberty," to prohibit idleness and compel every man to give an account of his time, and to be answerable for his way of life; how many idle drones, cheats, and sharpers, who now live at ease by defrauding the unwary public, would be obliged to throw off the ostentatious title of gentlemen, and earn their subsistence by honest labour and persevering industry?

TACITURNUS.

FOR THE MISCELLANY.

ON SLAVERY.

Strange is it that our bloods—

Whose colour, weight, and heat pour'd out together
Would quite confound distinction, yet stand off
In differences so mighty.

SHAKESPEARE.

THE injustice and inhumanity of enslaving and holding in bondage our fellow creatures, is an axiom of nature, that I rank among these self-evident truths which are not susceptible of controversy; and, of course, preclude the possibility of a doubt. I sincerely regret that so few of my fellow citizens agree with me in this opinion.—Who is there, that, feelingly alive to the miseries and woes of others, can so degrade the dignity of human nature, as to trample on or infringe their liberties?—Are not all men equal?—It is asserted, from good authority, that of "one blood God made all nations that dwell under heaven." Then, who is there so unprincipled as to violate the equal and sacred rights of man, by contributing to a practice, that produces such a catalogue of crimes, as that of enslaving his own species; and this for no other purpose than the sordid gain deduced from the sweat and labour of the unfortunate victims of his cruelty—Methinks I hear the groans of oppressed Africa, "borne o'er the Atlantic wave on the wings of fancy," sufficient to harrow up the soul of sensibility, and awaken the unfeeling advocate of slavery, to a sense of his perilous situation.—Ah! were Americans to reflect how much this sinful, pernicious, and horrid practice of slave-keeping tarnishes the escutcheon of liberty, they would entirely extirpate this national iniquity, "written throughout in characters of blood."

Strange horrid traffic! mournful to behold
Each tender feeling sacrificed to gold,
And fellow-men, like cattle, bought and sold!

FOR THE MISCELLANY.

ON PERSEVERANCE.

ALL the performances of human art, to which we look up with wonder or praise, are instances of the resistless force of perseverance. It is by this that the quarry becomes a pyramid, and distant countries are united by canals. If a man were to compare the effect of a single stroke of the pick-axe, or of one impression of a spade, with the general design and last result, he would be overwhelmed with a sense of their disproportion; yet these petty operations incessantly continued, in time, surmount the greatest difficulties, and mountains are levelled and oceans bounded by the slender force of human beings. It is, therefore, of the utmost importance to those who have any intentions of deviating from the beaten roads of life, and of acquiring a reputation superior to a name, hourly swept away among the refuse of fame, that they should add to their reason and their spirit the power of persisting in their purposes, and acquire the art of sapping what they cannot batter, and the habit of vanquishing obstinate resistance by obstinate attacks.

CHARACTER OF A GOOD WIFE.

A GOOD wife is one who considers her husband only as an useful slave to her pleasures, and seldom takes the least notice of him, except when she has a favour to ask, or wishes to impose on him. She follows her own inclinations, despises all conjugal affection, laughs at her dupe, guards her settlement like the dragon in the garden of the Hesperides, and should her good man be wise enough to see she does not love him, tears are always at hand to answer arguments. "My dear!" "my life!" and "my love!" are poured out in such melting accents, that he must be a monster of insensibility who is proof against their force.

When the cares of the world assail him, and he becomes dull with the pressure of calamity, she immediately charges him with want of affection, and, by her importunity, gives a poignancy to every pang, instead of partaking in his griefs. If she hears him traduced, she quietly endures it, without reply, or endeavouring to set people right; and if he happens to be injured by any one, so far from resenting it, she shews the warmth of her affection, by contracting a more than usual intimacy with the person who has wronged him. She is infinitely above assisting his views in business, and shews the most sovereign indifference for his happiness or success. If he thrives in the world, she either takes care by a thousand extravagancies to keep him humble, and prevent superfluity, or makes a private purse, to secure her own independence.—If he sinks, she stands aloof: and, instead of soothing his misfortunes, insults him with upbraidings for misconduct. In a word, she acts as if she married him only to have an opportunity of tormenting him; and granted him a superiority over his rivals in her affection, merely to treat him with the greater contempt. Should the poor

man take it into his head that her moral conduct has been none of the most unexceptionable, she becomes eloquent in avowing her immaculate innocence; and, in spite of all his senses, will convince him, or endeavour to convince him, that she never loved any one but him; that is, never cordially hated any other man, or thought him worthy of being plagued with her for life. She speaks in bass all day, but changes to treble at night; and—"My dear!" and "My love!" of the morning, is the "Brute!" and "Monster!" of the day. She thinks it would sink her importance to repose the smallest confidence in him, and is as private respecting her current concerns, as she is cautious to conceal the names of those whom she really regards. Nevertheless, she will sometimes acknowledge her husband to be a good kind of a man: always taking care, however, to close his character with some degrading exception, which wipes away more than half his virtues. To conclude; she is prodigal in prosperity, a very fury in adversity, a toll-gate continually exacting pay, and the everlasting enemy of domestic peace and felicity!

TO MAKE YEAST IN THE TURKISH MANNER.

TAKE a small tea-cup-full, or wine-glass full, of split or bruised pease; pour on them a pint of boiling water, and set the whole in a vessel all night on the hearth, or any other warm place: the water will have a froth next morning, and will be good yeast. The above quantity will make as much as eight pounds of bread.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

"*Juvenis*" is received, and shall appear in our next.

Obituary.

*The boast of heraldry, the pomp of power,
And all that beauty, all that wealth e'er gave,
Await, alike, th' inevitable hour;
The paths of glory lead—but to the grave!*

GRAY.

DIED,

At Bloomsbury, on Saturday morning, Mr. THOMAS PORTER.

At Hopewell, on the 5th, Mr. NOAH HUNT, aged 83 years.

At Princeton, Mr. CHRISTOPHER H. STRYKER, innkeeper.

At Dover (Del.) WILLIAM KILLEN, Esq. late chancellor of that state, aged 84 years.

At Charleston, Lieut. NATHANIEL FANNING, commander of Gunboat No. 1.

At New-York, Mr. JOSEPH THOMPSON, merchant, of the house of Rich and Thompson.

Lately, in Albemarle county, Virginia, the Rev. Mr. JAMES WADDELL. The author of the *British Spy*, a series of letters printed at Richmond in the year 1803, represents him as being totally blind, but as having the power of arresting the attention and captivating the hearts of his audience by an eloquence little inferior to magic; and pathetically laments that "so accomplished a scholar, so divine an orator," should be permitted to waste the remnant of his life in obscurity within a few miles of the metropolis of Virginia.

On Friday, October 4, 1805, in the Burrough of York, Pennsylvania, ANDREW ROBINSON, Esquire, one of the associate judges of that county, in the 52d year of his age.

Seat of the Muses.

MY NOISELESS HOURS I GIVE,
BLEST POETRY, TO THEE!

FOR THE MISCELLANY.

MR. EDITOR,

THE following is the production of a young bard, whose talents will, no doubt, entitle him at some future day to rank high among the favourites of the 'sacred nine.' If you deem it of sufficient merit, please to give it a place in your paper, and you will oblige

TACITURNUS.

AN ELEGY

On the Death of an unfortunate Pigeon.

Inscribed to the author's sister, a child of four years.

STOP, cruel boy! ah! spare thy spoiling hand,
The snow-white pigeon guiltless of a crime;
Why wouldst thou break the merciful command,
And stain my paper with the bloody rhyme?
On the house-top, ah! let him sit secure,
With honest freedom there he took his seat;
He looks around with innocence demure;
Ah! spare thy hand, the hapless stranger greet.
To our protection here he's doubtless fled,
Thinking within this peaceful roof to find
One that would shield from ill his hapless head,
And e'er protect him with a feeling mind.
Yes, hapless stranger, here within my arms,
Far from the evils of this wicked clime,
Secure from danger and from dread alarms,
Here dwell aloof from every daring crime.
The uplifted gun declares thy fate is fix'd,
Fly hapless bird, alas! the die is cast....
Ah! why in life are joy and sorrow mix'd?
Ah! why should sorrow all our comforts blast?
Swift from the bellowing gun the bullets flew,
And pierc'd his side....in agony, amaz'd,
He spread his wings before our view,
And after him in grief we gaz'd.
Far in some lonely woods, of peace bereft,
Pain'd with his wounds he gasps for breath....
Without a friend disconsolate he's left,
And now, alas! his eyes are sunk in death.
And now, my little sister, bend thine ear,
And hear the moral drawn from hence;
Be kind to every creature in thy care,
Be ready still to stand in their defence.
They all were made by that great Power on high,
Who form'd from chaos this revolving ball,
With his attentive wishes they comply,
And hear attentively his well-known call.
Then see not injur'd, with a wilful eye,
The greatest reptile or the smallest fly.

M.

FOR THE MISCELLANY.

Addressed to a Young Lady on seeing an unfinished Piece of her Poetry.

OH! may the muses lend their powers,
Thy fairer fame to raise;
While wisdom on life's checquer'd hours,
Its piercing light displays.
Oh! may thy "numbers sweetly flow"
Assisted by the sacred nine,
May ev'ry verse with beauty glow,
And with unfading lustre shine.

In ev'ry song may purity and truth,
Their varied powers combine;
Those powers which make the morn of youth
With heaven's own lustre shine.

In thy heart, oh! may their charms unite,
As thro' this nether world you stray;
And every image of delight,
Shall mark thy destined way.

And when time here to thee shall cease,
Thy soul on wings triumphant soar
To realms of everlasting peace,
Where earthly cares are known no more.

Anecdotes.

ANECDOTE OF WASHINGTON.

IN 1777, while the American army lay at Valley Forge, a good old quaker, by the name of Potts, had occasion to pass through a wood near head-quarters. As he traversed the dark brown forest, he heard at a distance before him a voice, which, as he advanced, became more and more fervid and interesting. Approaching with slowness and circumspection, whom should he behold, in a dark bower apparently formed for the purpose, but the commander in chief of the armies of the United States, on his knees, in an act of devotion to the Ruler of the Universe! At the moment when friend Potts, concealed by the trees, came up, Washington was interceding for his beloved country, with tones of gratitude that laboured for adequate expressions. He adored that exuberant goodness which, from the depth of obscurity, had exalted him to the head of a great nation, and that nation fighting at fearful odds for all the world holds dear. He utterly disclaimed all ability of his own for his arduous conflict; he wept at the thought of that irretrievable ruin which his mistakes might bring on his country; and, with a patriot's pathos, spreading the interests of unborn millions before the eyes of eternal mercy, he implored the aid of that arm which guides the starry hosts. Soon as the general, having finished his devotions, retired, friend Potts returned to his house, and threw himself into a chair by the side of his wife. "What's the matter, Isaac!" said she with tenderness: "thee seems agitated." "Indeed, my dear," quoth he, "if I appear agitated, it is no more than what I am. I have seen this day what I never shall forget. Till now I have thought that a christian and a soldier were characters incompatible. But if George Washington be not a man of God, I am mistaken; and still more shall I be disappointed, if God does not, through him, perform some great thing for this country."

NAIMBANNA.

An African, who a few years since was sent to England for instruction, on a certain occasion made use of these words—"When I saw that all good men read and valued the Holy Scriptures, and all bad men opposed and despised them, I was sure they must be what they were said to be—THE WORD OF GOD."

An Italian was accused of marrying five wives, when being carried before a judge, who asked "why he married so many?" he answered, "in order to meet with a good one, IF POSSIBLE."

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